

OFFICE OF THE STATE COORDINATOR

Services to People who are Deaf, Hard of
Hearing, Late Deafened, or DeafBlind



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

**Enjoy the
New Year!**

This is the second issue of the State Coordinator Quarterly Report to the community.

In the first issue, readers were introduced to the State Coordinator, the Advisory Council, and several important policy and resource initiatives.

This issue will report about the establishment of the statewide telemental health network, the regional Consumer and Family Involvement activity in the five regions, and the availability of a Specialized Provider Listing for Virginia and the Mid-

Atlantic Seaboard States. Enjoy!

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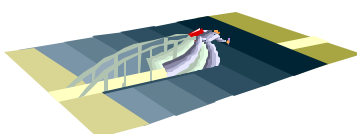
NEW SERVICE ACCESS IN VA!

**Deaf TeleMental
Health Network
Established**

The Advisory Council has long supported the use of teleconferencing technology to improve statewide access to services... And now... **(P. 2)**

**Specialized
Provider Listing
On Line**

One of the biggest challenges to consumers and professionals is finding qualified mental health providers with knowledge about deafness and hearing loss and interpreters who have experience in mental health settings. **(P. 3)**



Building New Bridges



**LOOK FORWARD TO
THE NEXT ISSUE:**

SUMMER, 2003

TeleMental Health Network (continued)

(continued from Page 1)

the six Regional Coordinators, the Mental Health Center for the Deaf (MHCD), all of the mental health facilities, training centers, and most of the community services boards in Virginia have state-of-the art telemental health conferencing equipment available to them to enhance the coordination of services and provide technical assistance in the Commonwealth.

Each site has Polycom equipment with four ISDN lines which allow for the transmission of clear sign language communication on-line. Most recently, MHCD had this equipment installed, thanks to the support and efforts of Debi Morrison, ITS Director at Western State Hospital, Dr. Jack Barber, the Director of the hospital, and Mary Clair O'Hara at the Central Office who has worked hard to install this equipment in various sites across the state.

This telemental health equipment will be used to

provide several different kinds of services.

First, the Mental Health Center for the Deaf at Western State Hospital will now be able to provide basic assessments and provide technical assistance to other facilities statewide. In the past, professional consultants were required to travel to facilities to assess new patients and clients for transfer to the MHCD. Now, this new technology will reduce the need for travel and increase the availability of consultation services.

Second, Regional Coordinators will be able to communicate easily with the MHCD and other community services boards in their region, if these other boards have the equipment available. Regional Coordinators will be able to make referrals, oversee client care, and plan and receive discharges in a timely fashion with the

availability of this equipment.

Virginia's Southwest region has been doing this for several years through their Appal-Link Program and has been most supportive and vocal about expanding this capability statewide.

Third, statewide meetings may be held, avoiding the need for extensive travel and overnight accommodations.

Fourth, continuing education training may now be provided to each of the regions, again avoiding the need for extensive travel and accommodations.

Finally, with some planning for the future, consumers and family members may be able to take advantage of this technology to learn more about mental health, available services, and perhaps provide peer support to one another.

There are many possibilities for the future with this technology, including providing interpreter services to many places in the State where these services are not available.

Specialized Provider Listing (continued)

(continued from Page 1)

Thanks to Diane Marsiglia and Bill Brenznovich of the DMHMRSAS Office of Information Technology Services, we now have a way to register and access up-to-date information on mental health professionals and interpreters who serve people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, or deafblind.

In the past, Mental Health Directories have been difficult to keep up-to-date because providers change locations, phone numbers, and jobs.

The Department has created an "Active Server Page" that allows professionals and programs to enter and change their practice and service information directly on the Web using a unique access code.

Anyone who needs the services of a culturally competent provider or an interpreter with experience working in mental health settings can access the website and download a list of providers in their area.

With this new resource arrangement, providers and program administrators, themselves, will be responsible for keeping their information up-to-date so that they may be contacted at any time.

In addition, people who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, or deafblind will be able to select the provider of their choice simply by accessing the website and reviewing or printing out the provider listing.

Go to the Virginia Statewide Deaf Mental Health Services Website:
<http://www.dmhmrsas.state.va.us/MH/Deaf/DHOH.asp>
And click on the Specialized Provider Listing button.



Policy Page

Consumer and Family Involvement Project



Consumer and Family Involvement Project: Beginning Dialogues FY 2002 Project Summary Report

**Statewide Services, People who are
Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened,
or DeafBlind
Virginia Department of Mental Health,
Mental Retardation, and Substance
Abuse Services**

Introduction

In June of 2001, the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services Consumer Affairs Office provided one-time funding to the Statewide Program, People who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, or DeafBlind to carry out a Consumer and Family Involvement Project in each of six Deaf Program regions. The long range goal of the Project is to initiate regional collaborative efforts to provide psychoeducational training and support participatory dialogues among consumers who are deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened, and deafblind and families that have a member with hearing loss.

In six regions, funding was used to identify and educate a group of at least 10

consumers and 10 family members through a collaborative efforts with independent living centers and consumer organization representation in the region. These trainings could be a synthesis of several existing training packages for each disability (MI and SA) that have measurable outcomes, specifically MESA/Family to Family NAMI-Virginia for the mental health piece, Strengthening Families Prevention Initiative substance abuse prevention parent and family skills training for the substance abuse piece, and Leadership Academy for the leadership skill piece. As a result of the training, consumer and family member participants increased knowledge of disability conditions, management, and resources, connections with consumer and family organizations, e. g., VA NAMI, VOCAL, MHA, MHPC, the Deaf Services Advisory Council, and VA Association of the Deaf, and skills to assist in outreach to other consumers and families in Virginia with similar problems or who have more isolated living conditions, e.g., ACR's, transportation, money, etc.

Each program approached this challenge in different ways. This report is a region-by-region compilation of these efforts that continue through consortia of providers and consumers that were formed in the grant period.

Project Beginnings

Prior to the fiscal year (2002) Regional Coordinators were asked what kind of activity they envisioned for this project in their region. Most said they would set up a psycho-educational activity either through a day-long meeting or a conference, and might focus on parenting work or outreach.

A planning meeting was held July 26, 2001 at Western State Hospital. Materials were distributed that described the overall scope of the project, including a booklet entitled *Participatory Dialogues: A Guide to Organizing Interactive Discussions on Mental Health Issues among Consumers, Providers, and Family Members* published by HHS and the diagram (See next page) that described the general vision of project activity.

Regional Projects

Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia contracted with a community-based agency, Northern Virginia Resource Center (NVRC) to plan coalition and consumer and family meetings in the community. They have held three meetings so far to formulate various kinds of consumer outreach initiatives to educate providers about the needs of this population. NVRC was already on contract with Fairfax-Falls Church CSB so the CYF project was added as an addendum to their con-

tract. Natalie Rinker and Becky Ebeling facilitated the first meeting. We have been consulting with Cheryl Heppner, Executive Director of NVRC, throughout the process. There have been two meetings and another one is scheduled for the end of this month. The first meeting was attended by leaders of organizations and clubs as well as consumers. The second one had more consumers. The next one will be only consumers. Randy is planning to attend this meeting also. The audience has given us a huge list of needs/wants. The group is off to a fantastic start and have given us a lot to work with.

Tidewater (Southeast)

The Tidewater area (Hampton-Newport News, Norfolk, Virginia Beach) identified one of the consumers to attend the BreakOut Conference in NC and several of their deaf clients to attend the Leadership Academy training for consumers facilitated by the Mental Health Association of Virginia. The funds will be used to provide Sign Language Interpreters to facilitate communication at this event. Training coordinators reported that, "Things went really well overall--we had an excellent group of consumers, most of them very ready for what the Leadership Academy has to offer. Our two deaf consumers, did very well...and a third, I think, especially seemed to benefit--A fourth was a hard of hearing participant--he was sort of--young and playful--not sure if he is quite ready for LA--but he hung in there. Actually, a fifth participant also identified

herself as being hard of hearing--she was terrific--very together--really interested in the materials--asked great questions--excellent participant. The interpreters were great--especially enjoyed Greg Camp--super guy and wonderful to watch! Stephanie Hall was also great. All in all, a terrific experience for all of us--the whole group wanted and got copies of the basic signs of sign language--so they got to expand their consciousness about challenges others have in addition to mental health challenges. Thanks for helping to make all of this happen--hopefully we'll have more opportunities in the future!"

Blue Ridge

Blue Ridge's Regional Coordinator hosted several planning meetings reviewing MESA training information, identifying how CSBs are encouraging consumer advocacy, and discussing how to best address deaf-specific issues, e.g., communication problems. The group proposed a dual track training program to teach advocacy and instruct consumers, families, and CSB staff in the use of assistive technology. It was also agreed that consumers and family members would benefit from the Southwest Region's Deaf Forum. Approximately 68 out of the 350 people who attended the Deaf Forum came from the Blue Ridge Region and attended training workshops about consumer advocacy provided by Ms. Helen Lang and Betti Thompson on the use of

assistive technology.

Richmond

The Richmond Region planned and presented a symposium for deaf, hard of hearing, late deafened and deafblind consumers on May 24th, 2002 with professional speakers who could sign and a consumer panel.

Central Virginia

Valley Community Services Board Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Regional Coordinator convened a group of consumer representatives and professional agency representatives for an initial meeting to determine interest in identifying and addressing issues for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind. About 20-25 people on the mailing list were invited to attend. At the initial meeting it was decided that the group was interested and monthly meetings are planned for an ongoing effort at networking. For the actual CFIP the group agreed to host a workshop to be held in Staunton on October 18-19, 2002.

The Networking Consortium (as the group is calling itself) designed a one day workshop with a keynote from Bobbi Cordano. She is a female lawyer who is Deaf from Minnesota who will be speaking on the topic of universal design for increasing partnerships between consumers and professional service providers. There will also be sev-

eral break-out sessions in the afternoon following up on the keynote topic with specific strategies for the local community.

The workshop will be take place in the Chapel on the campus of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind-Staunton on Friday, October 25 and will precede the Homecoming event at the school.

Southwest

Since the beginning of FY 2002, the Deaf Southwest Coalition (already in existence) set up consumer and family meetings that culminated in a second southwest regional conference in April, 2002 where over 350 people attended. Their first meetings and efforts focused on getting feedback from consumers and parent/caretakers. The Deaf Forum itself contained a Family Track and a half-day psycho-educational workshop for people who are deaf and have mental illness, their family members, and CSB staff who serve them.

Approximate Number of Consumers and Family Members Served Through This Initiative

	Consumers	Family Mem- bers	CSB Staff/ Professionals	<i>Total</i>
Northern Virginia	21	1		22
Tidewater	6			6
Blue Ridge	25	43		68
Richmond	22			22
Central Virginia				
Southwest	15	18		27
Approx Number Served	89	62		145

Resource Page

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT: A FEMA Funded Program

Following the tragic events of September 11 and the ongoing war on terrorism, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has declared Arlington County a disaster site and given Arlington County a grant to establish the Community Resilience Project (CRP). The mission of CRP is to promote resilience--the ability to "bounce back" after an unexpected hardship or disaster. Those who were close to the Pentagon attack, in particular, and in the surrounding region may be experiencing ongoing stress reactions in response to the tragedy. Even months after a disaster, it is not unusual for one to experience sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, preoccupation with the event, fear, anxiety, sadness, worry, social withdrawal, loss of appetite, and/or increased consumption of alcohol or drugs. These stress responses are normal reactions to an extremely abnormal situation. Thus, the purpose of CRP is to help individuals in the community to process and adjust to stressful events.

CRP performs outreach, education, and/or counseling services free of charge to individuals, families, businesses, or community organizations without regard to race, religion, or ethnicity. The project is free, flexible, and focused on helping people gain a wide range of skills to help with stress and anxiety as a result of heightened security measures or to develop new life strategies as a response to changed values or shifted priorities after September 11.

CRP consists of a culturally diverse team of mental health professionals fluent in a number of languages. Two recent additions to our staff have been hired to work with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, and Alexandria. They are knowledgeable in deaf issues and can adapt to a variety of communication modes and needs.

We are looking to collect personal stories from Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals regarding the experiences in which were encountered on September 11th. We hope to use these stories to advocate for improved emergency response services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Any information you can provide is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to send your story to the email addresses listed below.

For more information about the Community Resilience Project, please call 703-228-4831 (TTY) or 703-228-4788 (Voice).

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